

# **EXHIBIT 1**

5 of 5 DOCUMENTS

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**HEADLINE:** Algerian situation deserves fairer coverage

**BODY:**

I have read with much interest your May 11 news article about the situation in Algeria. There are several errors and untruths in the article that are likely to mislead readers who are not well-informed. It is important that such errors and untruths be corrected.

Let me begin with the economy.

Your article claims that Algeria depends on foreign charity. Allow me to say that philanthropy is far from the fundamental relation between states. As for Algeria, it gets no foreign aid, American or European. The name of Algeria has never been mentioned within the appropriations committees of Congress as either a recipient or an applicant for any such aid.

Europe has granted loans, not aid, to Algeria, which, despite the difficulties it faces, makes it a point of honor to respect its commitments and honor on time the payment of the service and the principal of its foreign debt. We have never considered any rescheduling for that debt, and our relations with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are based on programs voluntarily established by the Algerian authorities.

Now, regarding politics:

Well before the events of Eastern Europe, which are very popular in this country, Algeria had resolutely started a process to establish total and full democracy based on the respect for individual liberties, on freedom of information, freedom of speech, freedom to organize and freedom of association.

Today, the Algerian government officially recognizes 24 political parties in Algeria, including the Islamic Salvation Front.

The demonstration organized a few weeks ago by the Islamic Salvation Front and the one that took place on May 4, which four other political parties organized (and which your May 11 news article referred to), took place in the context of a democratic debate. As long as such debate is lawful, there is nothing that can be done to limit any action by any political party that makes known its point of view.

For many people, Islam is a source of danger - this is inferred from your article. However, the Algerian people is a Moslem people that practices its faith with dignity. Islam is not new in Algeria; it has always made up part of our identity and shielded us against colonialist alienation during the darkest moments of our struggle for freedom. The Islam we practice is an open, understanding and tolerant Islam that refutes the fanaticism of a minority which certainly does not represent the overwhelming majority of the Algerian people.

As to the alleged crumbling of the authority of the Algerian state, I would like to draw your attention to the following communique issued April 17 by the government:

"In view of the adventurous manipulations and the attacks against individual and collective liberties which were registered recently . . . the Government is determined to use in every area, without any exception, any and all means acknowledged by the law in areas of management of public affairs, upholding of public order and direct communication with the citizens, to protect the liberties and honest citizens and defeat any adventurous schemes."

The article's reference to former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella's declaration establishes an unacceptable

Algerian situation deserves fairer coverage The Washington Times May 21,

parallel between President Chadli Benjedid, a leader who is supported by the vast majority of his people and who is at the very origin of the democratic experience in Algeria which he is determined to carry out, and Nicolae Ceausescu who was condemned by his people.

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